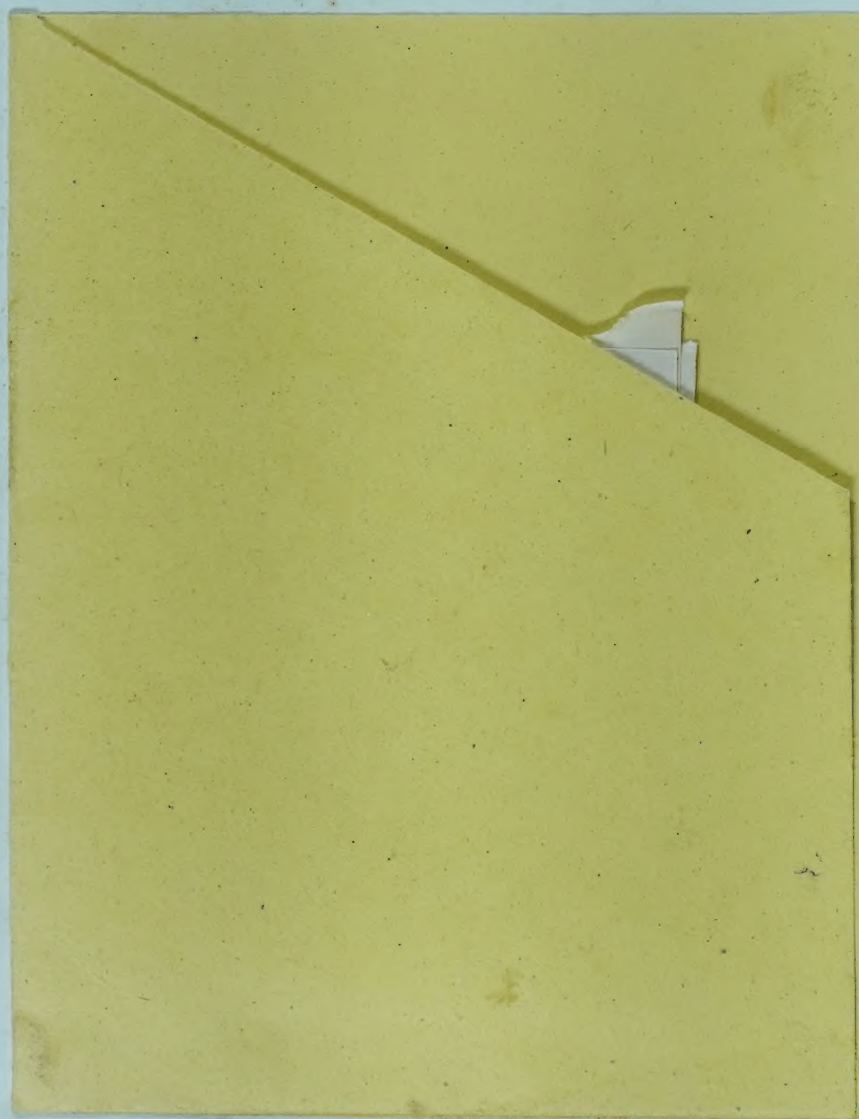




PLAY IT SAFE!

A guide to preventing children's accidents

01302



This booklet is published jointly by the Health Education Council and the Scottish Health Education Group in association with the BBC Television series 'Play it Safe!', produced by Peter Riding.

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COMMUNITY HEALTH CELL
47/1, (First Floor) St. Marks Road
BANGALORE - 560 001

Nobody would want to hurt a child.
But accidents hurt children, often
seriously.

I've seen the results of accidents to
children—the pain, and the bravery. In
nearly every case, it's us adults who've
been at fault, either directly or just
through not thinking.

That's why I want you to read this
booklet very carefully and keep it
around the house. It tells you what
you can do to prevent serious
accidents happening to children, and
that's worth a lot. It also tells you what
to do in an emergency, so if an
accident does happen, you'll be better
able to cope.

So do yourself and your kids a favour.
Play it safe!

Jimmy
Smile

Jimmy Savile OBE



4

On average, 4 children are killed by accidents **every day**.

Accidents are **the commonest cause of death** among toddlers and older children.

For children between the ages of 10 and 15, **nearly half** of all deaths are due to accidents.

Each year, **one child in every six** goes to a hospital accident and emergency department.

One in every three of all patients going to a hospital accident and emergency department is a child.

One in every six children in hospital is there because of an accident.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

For all children minor accidents are a part of growing up. Very often these accidents can't be avoided, and in any case they teach children a bit more about the world around them. But every year serious accidents happen to far too many children and cause serious injuries and even death. Many of these accidents could be avoided.

This booklet is about the kind of accidents that happen to children and what *you* can do to prevent these accidents happening.

Of course, the most important thing you can do is to *teach* children to recognise and cope with the dangers around them. And that isn't just a matter of telling children to be careful. It means setting a good example too. But it's just as important to prevent accidents by *protecting* children from danger—by using a fireguard for example, or a car safety seat, or a child-resistant container for pills.

It's impossible to prevent all accidents. But it helps to be aware of danger, and that's one of the things this booklet is about. Remember, the danger of accidents is always greater at times of stress, such as when someone in the family is ill, or when you're moving house. Take extra care too when you're in a hurry. That's another time when accidents are more likely to happen.

Something else to remember is that most of the places where we live and play have been designed by adults for adults. When a house or new estate is being built, the special needs of children are often forgotten, even though safer design doesn't necessarily cost more. This means that it's even more important for us to think about our children's safety and to do all we can to make the world about them safe.

One important way of doing this is to make sure that anything you buy for your child is well made and safe.

It's useful to know that there are British Standards laid down to make sure that certain goods made in this country are safe and efficient. Some products like prams and pushchairs, fireguards and toys, have to satisfy Government Regulations based on British Standards, so you can be pretty sure that goods will be safe if they carry the words "Conforms to BS".



Some goods have a **British Standards Kitemark** on the label. This means that the British Standards Institution has made an independent check that the manufacturer is making the goods to the British Standard. The Kitemark scheme doesn't apply to all goods. But if you see the Kitemark on the label of for example, children's car safety equipment, then you know that the product has been checked for safety.

You'll find more advice about what to look for when buying things for your children as you read through this booklet.

CHOKING AND SUFFOCATION

Accidents that cause choking and suffocation can happen all too easily, especially when young children are left alone with something that might be dangerous. So it's important to know what the dangers are and how to avoid them.

Babies are most in danger of choking or suffocation. But older children can be at risk when they're playing on their own.



This little boy nearly hanged himself when he caught his neck in the loop of a cord which opened and closed the living room curtains. He'd been playing near the window and slipped and fell, somehow catching his neck in the cord. He had to stay overnight in hospital to make sure there was no serious injury to his neck. Luckily for him, there wasn't.



How to prevent accidents

Beware of polythene bags. They can suffocate if children pull them over their heads.



Don't use a pillow for babies. Pillows can suffocate.

Make sure your baby can't snuggle down too far inside a quilted sleeping bag. If necessary, roll up something like a towel to put in the bottom of the bag.

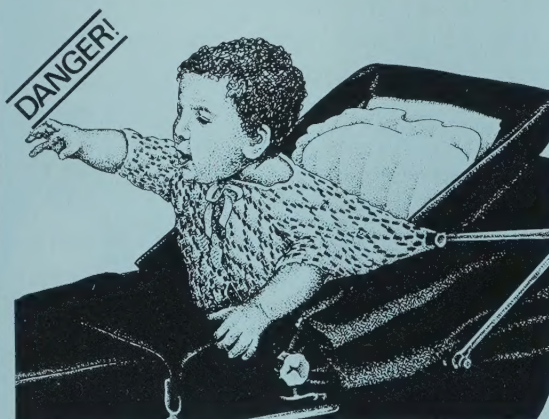
Make sure your baby's cot, and other nursery equipment, are made to an approved design. Look for the British Standards Kitemark on the label.



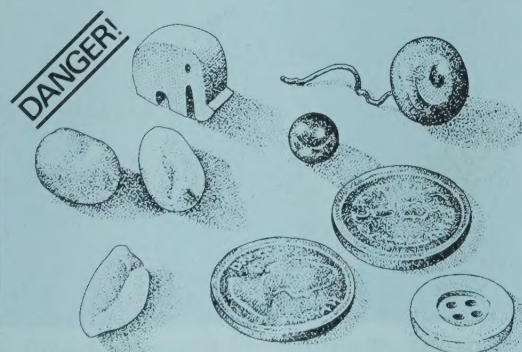
A dummy on a long string or ribbon can get caught or twisted and strangle a baby. If your baby has a dummy, pin it on with a safety pin and a *short* ribbon.



Never leave a baby alone when feeding. A baby left alone with a propped up bottle can easily choke.



Beware of open-weave nylon cardigans and cardigans with cords or ribbons threaded through the neck. They can catch on a hook or knob in a pram or cot and pull tightly round the baby's neck.



Babies learn by putting things in their mouths. So remember they can easily choke on small things like buttons, coins, tiny toys and any loose parts of toys like glass eyes.

Don't give peanuts to young children. They are a very common cause of choking.

What to do in an emergency

What to do if a baby chokes

1. Don't waste time trying to pick the object out with your fingers unless it's easy to get hold of. Probably it will be too far back and too slippery.
2. Hold the baby upside down by the legs. Slap the baby's back smartly between the shoulder blades. If the object doesn't come out, do it again.
3. If after several tries this hasn't worked, as a last resort give the baby's tummy a short sharp squeeze. This should push the object out of the baby's windpipe.

What to do for suffocation

1. Quickly take away whatever is causing the suffocation.
2. If the child has stopped breathing, give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. (See page 30.)

SCALDS

Small children don't understand that hot water and hot drinks can be dangerous. We often forget the dangers ourselves. Yet it only takes a cup of hot tea or coffee, a steaming kettle, or a bath that's too hot to scald a child badly. A serious scald can mean a long stay in hospital, and a really severe scald can kill.



This father is showing how his daughter was scalded. She was sitting on his knee while he was drinking a cup of coffee. She reached out for the cup, thinking the drink was for her, and the hot coffee splashed onto her neck. You can see that the scald is quite big and very sore.



How to prevent accidents

Kettles and teapots

Keep kettles and teapots out of children's reach, well away from the edges of tables or worktops.

Remember too that the water in a kettle or teapot can still scald *up to half an hour after it has boiled.*

Make sure that your kettle flex is short and out of reach so that children can't tug at it.

Never keep a kettle simmering. Steam can scald badly.

Hot drinks

Don't drink anything hot with a child on your lap.



Don't carry hot drinks over a child's head.



Don't use table cloths that children can pull at.

Keep hot drinks away from the edges of tables. And remember that a mug is safer than a cup with a narrow base.

Bath time

Children have died in baths of very hot water. So always put cold water in the bath first and don't have your hot water thermostat set too high.

Always test the temperature of the water before you put your child in the bath. It should be comfortably warm but not hot. Water doesn't have to be very hot to scald a small child.

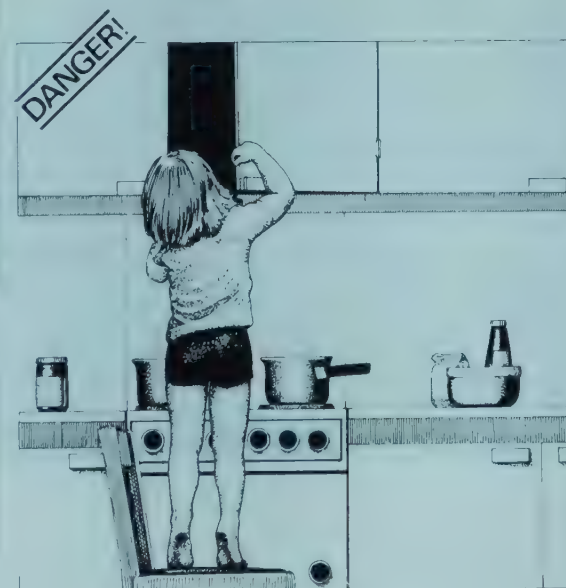
Never leave a baby or toddler alone in the bath.

Cookers



Toddlers are quite likely to pull at any pan handles they can reach. A good answer is to fit a safety guard round the cooker top. And turn pan handles away from the edges of the cooker or worktop.

When you're cooking, or boiling nappies, put your baby in a playpen away from where you are working.



It's best if your cooker is not too near a door and doesn't have cupboards fitted above it. Running through the door, or climbing up to reach something in the cupboard, a child could easily knock over a pan on the cooker.

It's a good idea to have worktops on both sides of the cooker so that you don't have to carry hot pans across the kitchen.

What to do in an emergency

1. *Immediately* put the scald under cold water or run plenty of cold water over it to reduce the heat in the skin. It's important to do this for at least 10 minutes. Take off any clothes covering the scald so that the water can get to it.
2. Take off anything tight like a belt or jewellery. Scalded skin can swell up.
3. Next, cover the scald with a clean, non-fluffy cloth like a clean cotton pillowcase or linen tea towel. This cuts down the danger of infection.
4. Then call an ambulance, or take the child to hospital. You should take a child to hospital for anything other than a very small scald.

Don't put butter, oil or ointment on a scald. It only has to be cleaned off again before treatment can be given.

Don't prick any blisters. You'll let germs in.

FALLS

Children of all ages fall and hurt themselves from time to time. Falls are part of growing up, and luckily most aren't serious. But some falls can cause very severe injuries, such as head injuries, and it's these falls you should try to prevent.

For babies, the danger is rolling off the edge of something like a bed, chair, table or kitchen worktop. Babies learn to roll over very early—at about five months old or even earlier. Another danger is a bouncing cradle on a table or worktop. Babies can easily bounce off the edge.

Toddlers soon learn how to climb and explore. To them, climbing on furniture doesn't seem dangerous. It's just fun. But it's very easy for a toddler to fall off a piece of furniture, or down the stairs, or even out of a window or balcony.

With older children, adventure accidents are a problem. Climbing trees, high walls or fences can be dangerous, but lots of children like taking the risk and 'daring' each other to do something.



This toddler was climbing on the horizontal bannisters you can see in the picture when he fell two storeys down to the hall. When his mother picked him up she thought his injuries were even worse than they were. As it was, he got a nasty injury to his face and knocked some teeth out, and he had to spend a few days in hospital.



How to prevent accidents

Windows

Children can easily climb up and fall out of windows. Look at your windows and see if you can make sure they can't be opened too wide. This can be a simple do-it-yourself job.

Always check the windows for safety when you move house.

Try not to put chairs, or anything a child might climb on, near to windows.

It's a good idea to fit safety catches on your upstairs windows. Then make sure they're used. You can fit catches yourself. Ask about them at do-it-yourself or hardware shops. If there are special keys to the catches, keep them in a safe place.

If you think that a window is very dangerous, especially in a child's bedroom, then fit window bars. It's important that the bars can be removed in case of fire. Some types have keys for this, so keep the keys safely.

Stairs



Stairs are tempting for climbing on, both up and down. So use a removable safety gate. If you're buying one look for the words "Conforms to BS 4125".

Make sure that there's no room for a child to crawl under the bannisters at the top of the stairs.

Board up horizontal bannisters so that they can't be used like ladders for climbing up.

Balconies

Balconies can be dangerous for young children. If you have a private balcony, keep the door to it locked so that your child can't go out onto the balcony alone.



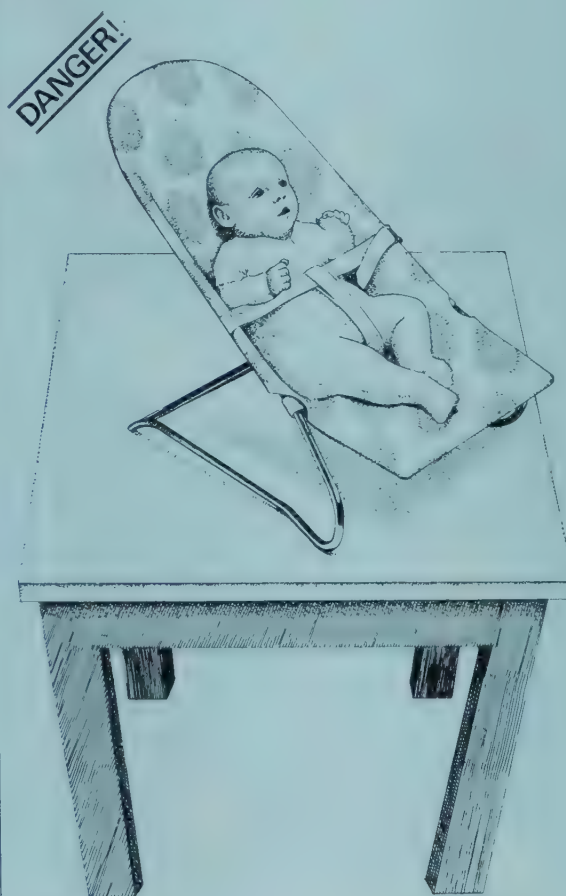
Horizontal balcony railings are very dangerous because they're so easy to

climb. Board them up, or fit wire-netting guards.

Never put anything a child can climb on near balcony railings.

Babies

Never leave a small baby where it might roll off the edge of something and fall.



Don't put your baby in a bouncing cradle on a table or worktop.

If your baby's high chair or pushchair has a harness, make sure you use it.

Older children

Try to teach older children to take risks sensibly. Try to teach them how to decide whether what they want to do is too dangerous or not.

If your children like adventure sports, such as rock-climbing, make sure they are properly taught and have the right equipment.

What to do in an emergency

1. If the child has stopped breathing, give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation immediately. (See page 30.)
2. If the injury looks at all serious, or you don't know what's wrong, then call an ambulance.
3. If you think there may be broken bones or internal injuries, don't move the child unless you have to.
4. If the child is breathing but unconscious, gently place in the 'recovery position'. (See page 31.)
5. If you think the child has broken a bone, see page 32.

POISONING

Every year thousands of children swallow poisonous things in and around the home. Many have to go into hospital and some even die.

Very often these accidents happen because medicines, or dangerous household or garden products, have been left where children can find them. To small children, these things don't seem dangerous. Pills can look just like sweets. Medicine, or a bottle of bleach, can look like something to drink. And children will try anything, just out of curiosity.



These photos show just how curious children can be. This three-year-old knew that his parents kept pills and medicines in a high cupboard in the kitchen. He carried a chair from the dining room, across the hall and into the kitchen so that he could climb up onto the kitchen worktop. He got some pills out of the cupboard and, even though they were in a strip pack, he managed to swallow eight of them before his mother found him. He became very sleepy and unsteady, but he recovered after two days in hospital.



On the left are drugs, on the right are sweets. Can you tell the difference?



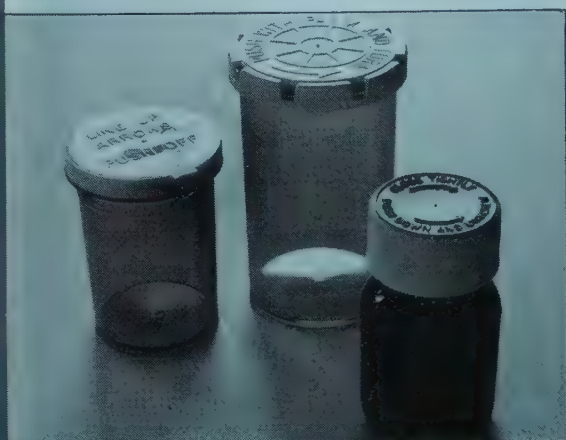
How to prevent accidents

Pills and medicines

Keep medicines out of children's reach. Use a cupboard that locks, and keep it locked. Keep all your pills and medicines in the cupboard. Don't be tempted to keep the odd bottle out just for convenience.

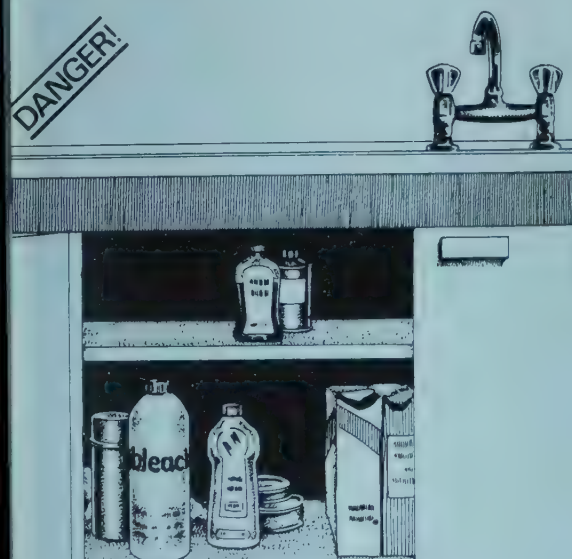
Be especially careful when your child goes to visit grandparents or

other people's houses, or when a grandparent or friend comes to stay. A lot of people still have dangerous medicines in easy-to-open bottles and they forget to keep them away from children.



Ask your chemist to give you your pills in child-resistant containers and always close the containers properly after use. Blister or strip packs also make it more difficult for a child to swallow a lot of pills at once.

Household and garden chemicals



Keep dangerous household and garden chemicals in a safe place. A locked cupboard is best, or a very high cupboard – but remember that children climb up to places you would never have thought they could reach.

DANGER!



Keep all dangerous chemicals in their original containers. For example, never put paraffin or weed killer into a lemonade or squash bottle.

Don't use bleach and lavatory cleaner together. The mixture can give off dangerous fumes.

Check where you keep these:

- ☐ Caustic soda
- ☐ Bleach
- ☐ Lavatory cleaner
- ☐ Disinfectant
- ☐ Weed killer
- ☐ Slug pellets
- ☐ Insecticides
- ☐ Petrol
- ☐ Battery acid
- ☐ Paraffin
- ☐ White spirit or turps
- ☐ Paint stripper
- ☐ Methylated spirit
- ☐ Rat poison

Poisonous plants

Discourage children from eating any plants or fungi. Some are poisonous. Laburnum seeds, for example, can cause tummy upsets and some toadstools are really dangerous and can even kill.

What to do in an emergency

Pills and medicines

1. If you're not sure whether your child has swallowed something, spend a minute or two looking for the missing pills. Check they haven't rolled under a chair, for example.
2. If you still think something has been swallowed, take your child straight away to your doctor or hospital – whichever is quickest.
3. If possible, take with you the container and a sample of whatever you think has been swallowed.

Don't give salt and water to make the child sick. Salt can be very dangerous in large amounts.

Household and garden chemicals – turps, petrol, paraffin, acids, caustics etc.

1. Gently give the child a glass of milk to drink. If there's no milk, give water instead. This dilutes the poison.
2. Then quickly take the child to hospital.
3. If possible, take with you the container and a sample of whatever you think has been swallowed.

BURNS

Every year children die in house fires and many more are badly burnt. All too often these fires are started by carelessness. A smouldering cigarette, for example, can easily start a fire. And many fires are started by children playing with matches. Children and matches are a dangerous combination.

But of course it's not only fires that cause burns. There are things round every home that can burn a child badly – a hot iron, for example, or the elements of an electric fire, or a dish just out of the oven. Toddlers are most at risk. They're so curious about anything and everything they can reach, and they don't understand the dangers of heat and fire.



This little girl was getting ready for bed when she fell backwards onto an electric fire. Her parents had taken the guard off the fire. You can see she burnt her bottom badly. The burn was very sore and took some time to heal.



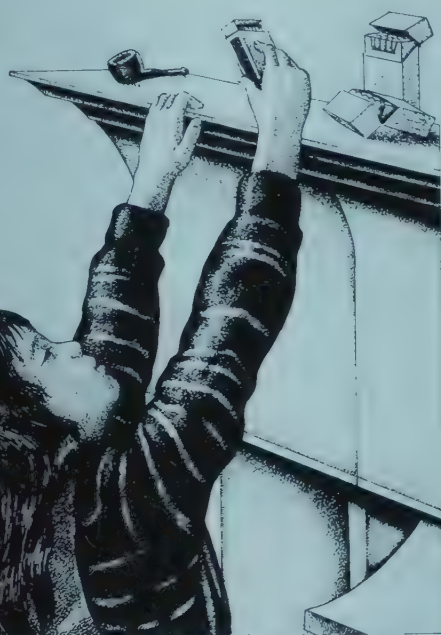
How to prevent accidents

Around the house

Switch the iron off immediately you finish ironing and put it out of children's reach. Remember too that children might pull at the iron flex.

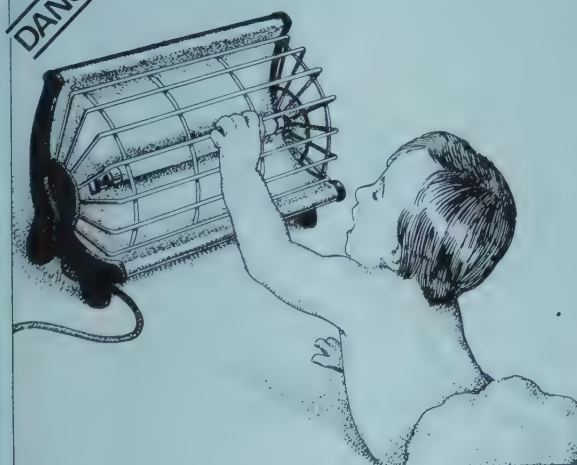
Never leave children alone in the house.

DANGER!



Keep matches and lighters well out of their reach.

DANGER!



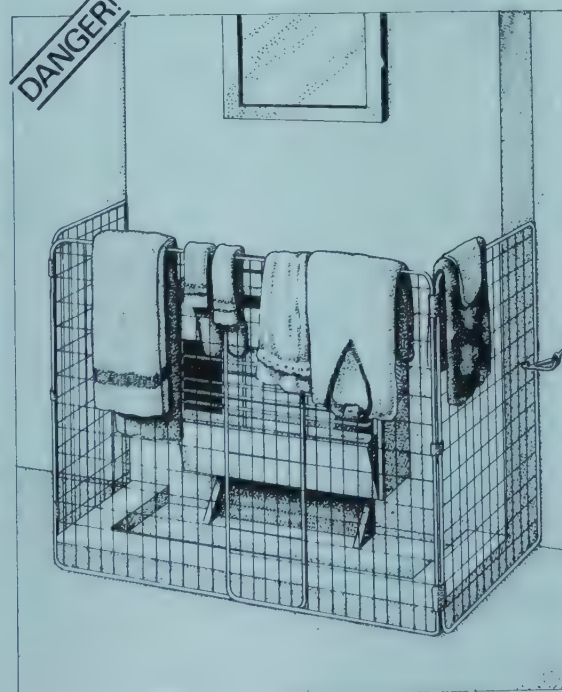
Never take off the guards that are fitted to gas or electric fires. Remember that crawling babies will

try to grab hold of anything they can reach, such as a glowing fire element.



Use special safety fireguards in front of all fires. These should have a cover on top and should be fixed to the fireplace or wall. Use them even before your baby starts to crawl. You never know when your baby will make that first dangerous journey.

DANGER!



Don't lean anything against, or hang anything on, fireguards.

Don't use movable electric fires in the bathroom.

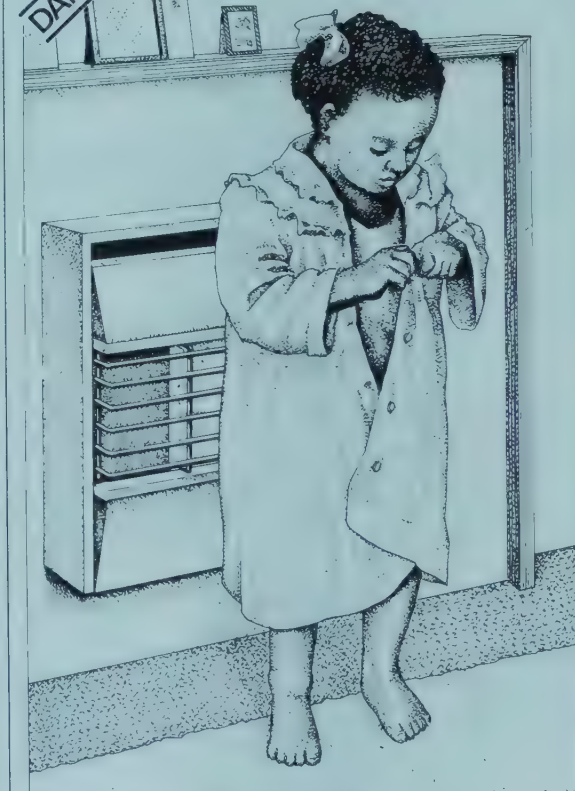
Don't hang a mirror on the wall above a fire. Anybody going close to look in the mirror may be burnt.

DANGER!



Keep petrol and paraffin away from children and don't store in large quantities.

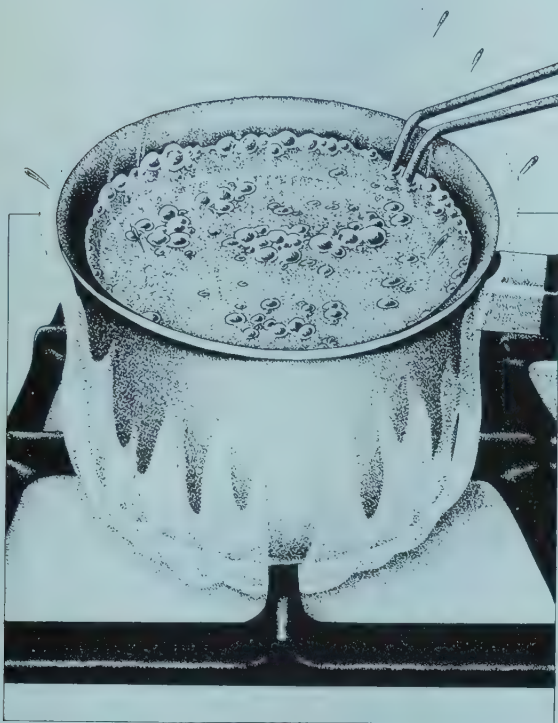
DANGER!



When you buy children's night clothes or dressing gowns, try to make sure they are flame-resistant. You can be sure that all children's night dresses made in this country are flame-resistant. For dressing gowns and other clothes, remember that flimsy cotton is the most dangerous material.

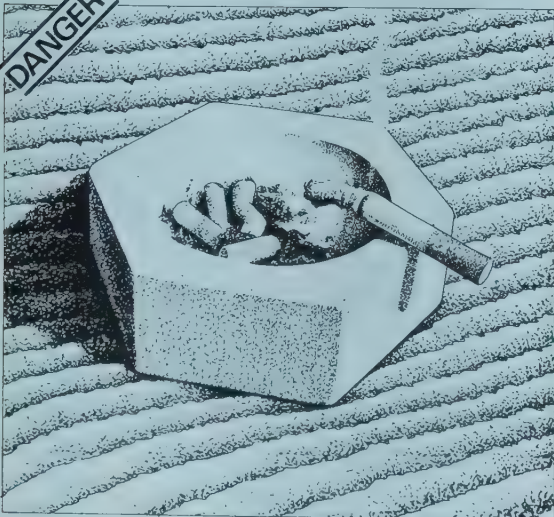
Preventing fires

DANGER!



Keep a close eye on oil or fat on the cooker. And don't fill your chip pan too full. Chip pan fires are very common.

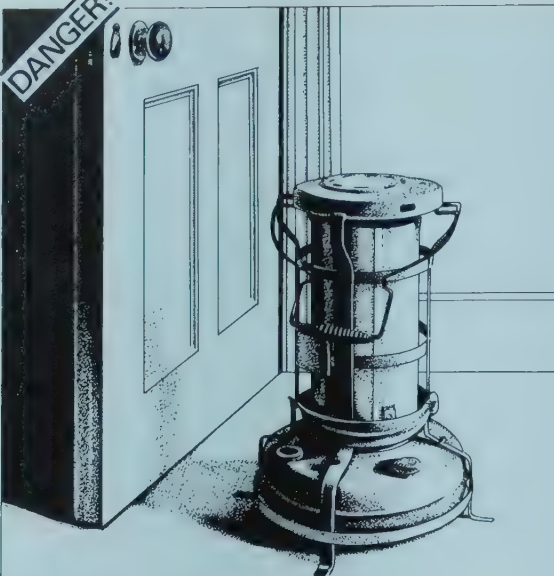
DANGER!



Never smoke in bed. And beware of falling asleep in a chair when you're smoking.

Don't leave burning cigarettes in ashtrays.

DANGER!



Don't leave paraffin heaters in a draught or where they're in danger of being knocked over. Fasten them to the wall if possible. Be especially careful with the older type of paraffin heater.

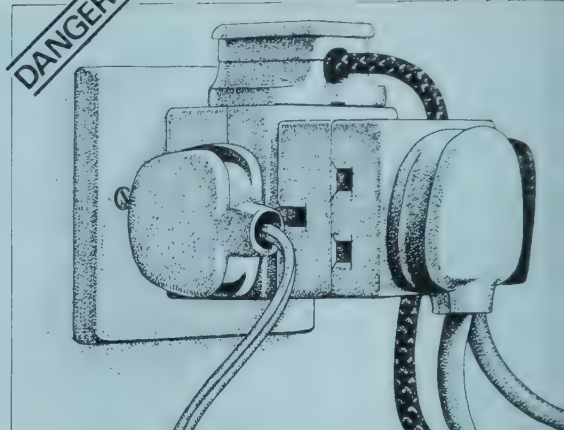
DANGER!



Keep curtains well away from fires and cookers. Make sure electric fires are not too close to furniture or drying clothes.

Always unplug the television and other electrical appliances when you're not using them to make absolutely sure they are safe. Otherwise a fault can cause a fire.

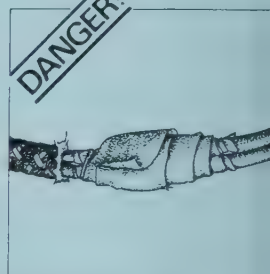
DANGER!



DANGER!



DANGER!



Remember too that fires can be caused by faulty wiring. Check that your plugs are correctly wired and sockets are not overloaded.

Outdoor fires

DANGER!



Fireworks cause tragedies every year. Teach your children to handle them carefully. And don't let children get too close to bonfires in case they fall onto them.

Use camping stoves with great care. They can be very dangerous, especially with young children around.

Don't let children have matches or candles inside a tent if they're camping.

What to do in an emergency

House fires

1. Get everybody out of the house at once. Don't waste time trying to put the fire out. Fumes from burning furniture can kill very quickly.
2. Send for the Fire Brigade by dialling 999.
3. Shut all doors and windows if you have time.

Small fires

If it's a small fire, try to smother it quickly with a blanket or rug.

Chip pan fires

Don't try to carry a blazing chip pan out of the house. *Don't* pour water on it. Turn off the heat. Put a damp cloth or lid over the pan. Leave it to cool.

Clothing

If clothing is on fire, make the child lie on the floor to stop the flames reaching the face. Cover the child with a wool rug or blanket to smother the flames. Or make the child roll on the floor.

First aid for burns

1. Immediately put the burn under cold water, or run plenty of cold water over it, to reduce the heat in the skin. It's important to do this for at least 10 minutes.
2. Take off anything tight like a belt or jewellery. Burnt skin can swell up.
3. Then cover the burn with a clean, non-fluffy cloth like a clean cotton pillow case or linen tea towel. This cuts down the danger of infection.
4. If burnt clothes are stuck to the skin, don't try to take them off.
5. Then call an ambulance, or take the child to hospital. You should take a child to hospital for anything other than a very small burn.

Don't put butter, oil or ointment on a burn. It only has to be cleaned off again before treatment can be given.

Don't prick any blisters. You'll let germs in.

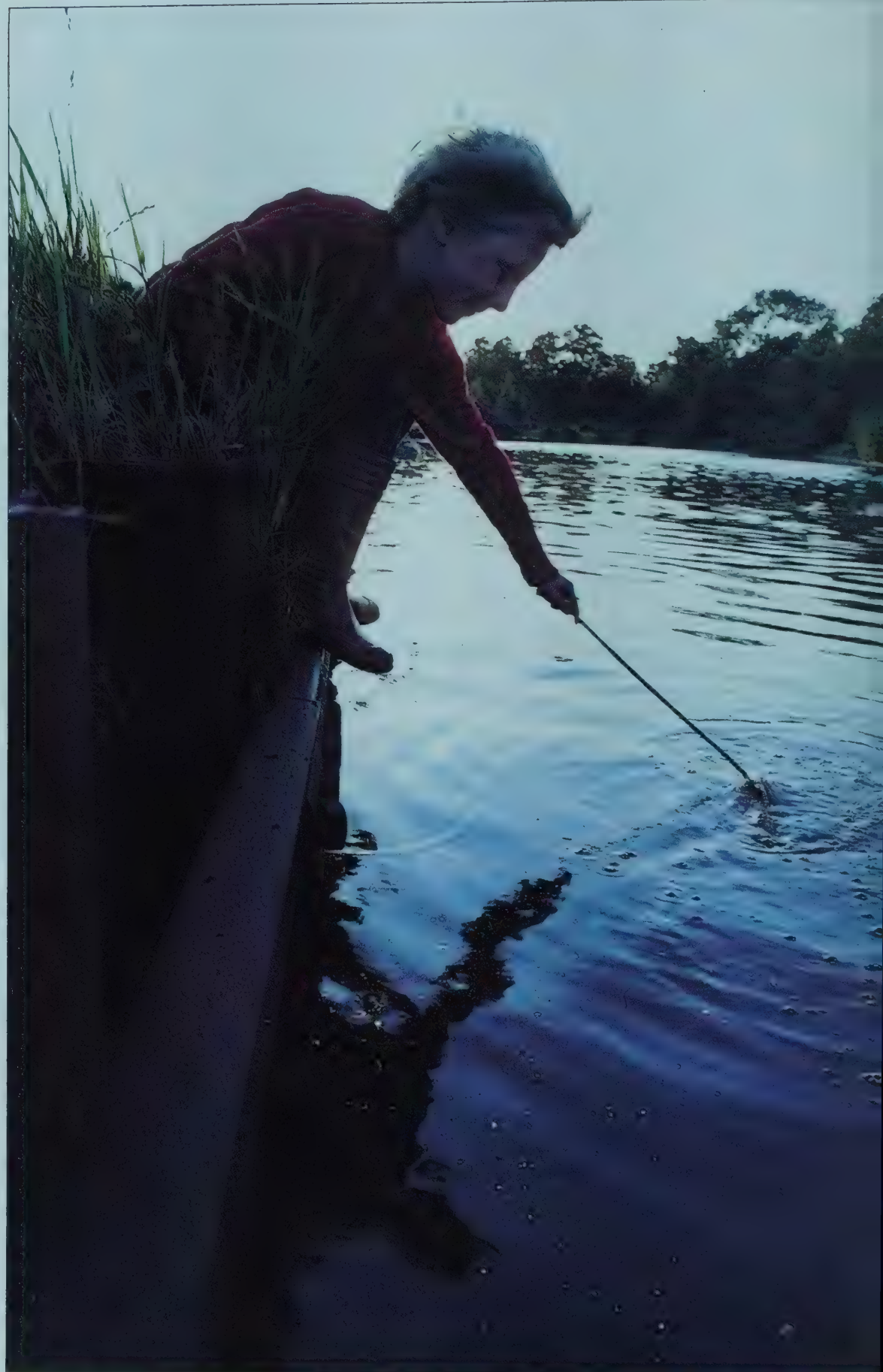
DROWNING

Children love playing with water. Whether it's in the bath at bed time or in the nearest pond or stream, water is fun. But it is also dangerous. A baby or toddler can drown in very shallow water – far less than you put in the bath. And every year young children do drown in places like ponds and streams, canals, water troughs, garden ponds and swimming pools.

Young children who wander off alone to explore can be in real danger. They need to be watched. Older children too get into difficulties in sports like sailing or canoeing. So they need to be taught how to cope.

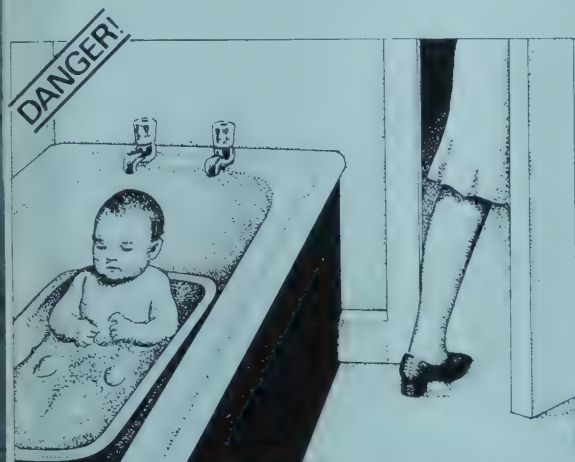


This little boy is looking at the water tank where he very nearly drowned. One day while his parents were gardening he wandered off to play on his own. He was trying to get a toy out of the water tank when he fell in and his mother found him right under the water. Luckily, she found him in time and he recovered from the accident. But he could easily have drowned.



How to prevent accidents

Don't leave young children alone when they are playing with or in water.



Never leave a baby or young toddler alone in a bath or basin for one second. If the front door bell or telephone rings, lift your baby out of the bath.



Keep a close eye on young children when they're paddling. At the seaside, make sure they wear inflatable arm bands.

Cover the garden pond with strong wire mesh or fence it off.

Make sure your children learn to swim as early as possible, and that they learn about water safety. They should also learn rescue skills. (See page 36.)



Don't let children play by themselves with inflatable mattresses or dinghies at the seaside because they can easily drift out to sea.

If your children want to do water sports like sailing or canoeing, they must be properly taught. It's best if they join a club. Make sure they always wear life-jackets. If you're buying a life-jacket, look for the British Standards Kitemark on the label.



Beware of the dangers of thin ice on ponds.

What to do in an emergency

1. If the child is not breathing, give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation immediately. (See page 30.)
Don't give up too soon. Breathing can start again up to an hour after it has stopped so long as you keep on with resuscitation.
2. If the heart has stopped, give heart massage. (See page 30.)
3. If the child is unconscious but still breathing, place in the 'recovery position'. (See page 31.)

CUTS

Glass causes the most serious cuts. Few people realise just how common and how serious glass cuts are. Yet every year about 7,000 children end up in hospital because of accidents with glass. These are not only accidents with things like broken bottles. More often the children have fallen through a glass door or window and are badly hurt. Ordinary glass is very brittle and when it breaks its sharp, jagged pieces can cut like daggers.

Toddlers have accidents with glass and other sharp things because they're unsteady on their feet and fall over easily. Older children are at risk when they're playing rough games, or running in and out of the house.



This two-year-old cut his wrist badly when he fell through the french windows at home. He was running after a ball, stumbled and put out his hand to stop himself falling. His hand went straight through the glass. The tendons in his wrist were cut and had to be sewn up.

You can see the broken glass in the french windows. If this had been safety glass, the accident would not have happened.



How to prevent accidents

Doors and windows

If you have large or dangerous areas of glass in your house, especially doors or windows with glass in the lower part, the best thing you can do is fit safety glass. This is glass that is specially laminated or toughened and, like wired glass, it is much safer than ordinary glass.

You can also get special plastic film to cover glass in doors and windows and this too makes it much safer.



Fixing plastic film

At least mark dangerous glass by sticking on coloured strips, or board up the glass in low doors and windows. Remember, frosted or patterned glass is unlikely to be safety glass.

Ask at your do-it-yourself shop or glass merchant for advice about ways of making the glass in your home safe.

Other glass



Don't let a toddler walk around holding anything made of glass like a tumbler or milk bottle.

If your child wears glasses, ask the optician or at the clinic about splinter-proof or plastic lenses.

Knives, scissors and other sharp tools



Keep all sharp things away from toddlers. Teach older children how to use sharp tools safely.

Toys

Make sure toys have no sharp edges or points.

What to do in an emergency

1. If there's severe bleeding, press firmly on the wound using a pad of clean cloth if available, or your fingers. Keep pressing until the bleeding stops. This may take 10 minutes or more. If it's a large wound, try to press the edges of the wound together.
2. Don't use a tourniquet or tie anything so tightly that it stops the circulation.
3. If possible, lay the child down and raise the injured limb. This helps to stop the bleeding. But don't do this if you think the limb is broken.
4. Cover the wound with a clean dressing.
5. Then call an ambulance or take the child to hospital.
6. If the wound is dirty, or the accident happened outside, ask your doctor about a tetanus injection.

COMMUNITY HEALTH CELL
47/1, (First Floor) St. Marks Road
BANGALORE - 560 001

PLAY ACCIDENTS

Of course children need to play. It helps them learn about the world around them. But there's no need for them to learn about danger the hard way. It's up to adults to protect children from danger as much as possible and also to teach them how and where they can play safely.



This girl was four years old when she fell off the top of the slide in her local playground. You can see in the photo how high the slide is. She broke a leg and fractured her skull and she was in hospital for a long time. Although she's quite all right again now, she was very upset by the accident and fretful while she was in hospital, as most small children are.

Try to watch young children when they are playing.



How to prevent accidents

Is your playground safe?

- ☐ Is the ground soft?
- ☐ Is the slide built into a slope?
- ☐ Is there plenty of space around the swings?
- ☐ Are the swing seats made of rubber or plastic rather than wood?

Playgrounds should be exciting and fun but they should also be safe. Although many playgrounds are, especially the ones that are supervised, it's still best not to let very young children go to playgrounds on their own.

Playground equipment should be designed so that a child can't fall too far. Slides and climbing frames should not be too high. Slides that are built into a slope or mound are the safest.

If possible, use a playground with a soft surface like sand or pea-gravel. Concrete or asphalt is very hard if you fall on it.

Children are often hit by swings or heavy moving equipment like 'witches' hats' and 'rocking boats'. So don't let them get too close. It's best if swing seats are made of rubber or plastic.

If you find playground equipment in a dangerous state, report it at once to your local Council.

Toys

Most toys are safe nowadays but look out for loose glass eyes in soft toys and sharp edges or points on metal toys, especially imported ones.

Accidents often happen when babies or toddlers play with toys meant for



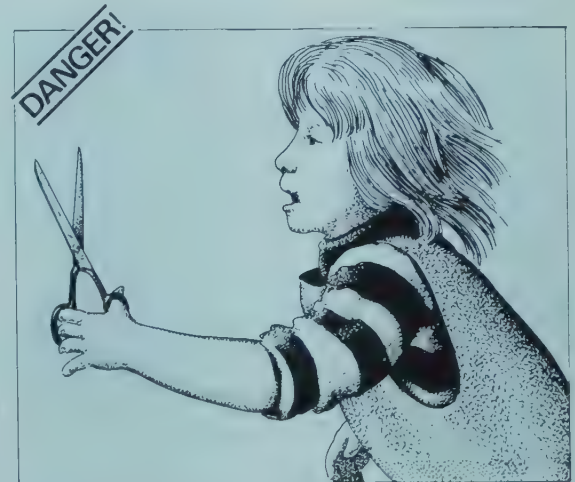
older children. When you buy toys, look for the age group given on the packaging. And keep an eye on older children when they're playing with younger ones.

Some rules to teach your children



Never to walk or run around with anything sharp, like a pencil or lollipop stick, in their mouths.

Never to put a plastic bag over their head.



To point scissors downwards when they carry them about.



Not to touch electric sockets or plugs.



Not to slam doors. Young fingers are easily trapped.

ON THE ROADS

This year 470 of us are going to kill a child on the roads. 50,000 children are going to be injured, many of them seriously. Hundreds will be permanently disabled.

Why are these figures so high? Well, traffic is probably the most complicated and dangerous everyday thing children have to cope with. Crossing a road is far from easy. It means being able to judge the speeds and distances of traffic accurately. It means being able to react quickly. And young children simply can't manage it. Unfortunately, a lot of parents think that they can and let their children cross roads alone long before they can do it safely.

Many parents also think that accidents only happen on busy roads. So it's worth remembering that a great many of the children killed on the roads are killed within a few hundred yards of their own homes.



This boy was lucky! He ran out into the road from behind an ice-cream van and was knocked down by a car. He could have been killed. As it was, his injuries were quite bad enough.



How to prevent accidents

Don't let very young children out on the roads by themselves. They don't understand the dangers. When you go out, talk to your child about the roads and traffic and explain what the dangers are.

For toddlers, use walking reins when you're out near roads.

Teach your child the Green Cross Code. Go through the Code every time you cross the road until your child really knows it. Then get your child to cross quiet roads while you watch. But even when they know the Code, don't

let young children out alone where the traffic is busy or fast.

Teach your child the safest places to cross roads: subways, footbridges, zebra or pelican crossings, at traffic lights, by a policeman or traffic warden, with a lollipop man or lady. If you can't find any of these safe crossing places, then choose one where you can see clearly along the road both ways.

It's a good idea for children aged three and over to join one of the 'Tufty' clubs organised by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents. At these clubs, learning about road safety can be fun. Get details from your Road Safety Officer at your local authority. Look in your telephone directory for the local authority number.

Make sure your child can be seen. Children out in the dark should always wear a reflective arm band, coat or disc and light-coloured clothes.

Always set a good example by crossing the road safely and correctly yourself.

'He should have looked and seen me!'

That's what many drivers say when they've knocked down a child. But perhaps the driver should have looked and seen the child, and avoided him.

Look out for the danger signs: a school with children arriving or leaving, an ice-cream van, a group of children on roller skates. Never expect a child to behave safely and sensibly. Be prepared for anything.

Remember too that many children are killed by drivers under the influence of drink or drugs or who are driving too fast for the road conditions. Make sure you are never one of these drivers.

Teach your children the Green Cross Code



1. First find a safe place to cross, then stop.



2. Stand on the pavement near the kerb.



3. Look all round for traffic and listen.



4. If traffic is coming, let it pass. Look all round again.



5. When there is no traffic near, walk straight across the road.



6. Keep looking and listening for traffic while you cross.

CHILDREN ON BIKES

Cycling accidents often happen because children are allowed out on the roads before they're really ready. After all, it takes time to learn to ride a bike safely, and riding safely means much more than just staying on. For example, a child must be able to turn and look behind, and do hand signals without wobbling. And at the same time as handling the bike safely, the child must be able to cope with the roads and traffic.



Cars are heavy and fast and they can wreck bicycles as well as break boys' legs. This boy was knocked down on a main road when he rode too fast out of a side lane. He skidded and a car coming round the bend of the road hit him. He was ill for many months as a result of this accident.



How to prevent accidents



Make sure that your child's bike has the right size of frame and that the saddle and handlebars are correctly adjusted. When sitting on the saddle, a child's feet should comfortably touch the ground and hands must be able to work the brake levers.

Make sure children can ride safely and can cope with roads and traffic before you let them out alone. As a general rule, children under nine years old should never be allowed out on the roads on a bike alone. An adult should always be with them.

Encourage your child to go in for a Cycling Proficiency Test. You can get details of courses from your Road Safety Officer at your local authority. Look in your telephone directory for the local authority number. But remember that these courses are often run in school playgrounds, so it's important to make sure that what's learnt is then put into practice on the roads.

Make sure that your child understands road signs. Explain, for example, that 'crossroads' does not mean 'cross the road'. Words like 'one-way street' and 'traffic island' can also be difficult for children to understand.

Teach your child about the dangers of:

1. Turning right
2. Riding off the pavement onto the road without looking
3. Roundabouts
4. Passing parked cars
5. Motorists coming out of side roads



Teach children to ride in single file on narrow roads or in traffic. Show them how to plan routes to avoid busy roads or tricky junctions.



Teach your child that it's dangerous to show off on a bike by riding with 'no hands'.

Cycling on the pavement is strictly speaking illegal. But it's accepted that it's safer for young children on tricycles or small bikes. Teach them to be careful of people walking on the pavement.



Make sure that your child wears reflective clothing when out on a bike, especially in the dark or in bad weather. For night-time riding, lights must be working and reflectors must be clean.

Bicycle maintenance can be life-saving. It's up to parents to check their children's bikes regularly and get repairs done properly. Teach your child, too, to check brakes and lights regularly.

Teaching children to ride motor bikes off the roads is becoming popular now. But remember that young children can't co-ordinate hands and feet with enough skill, nor judge speed and distance accurately. Fourteen-year-olds probably can. But for five-year-olds, it's an emphatic *no*.

A message to drivers

Children on bikes are often seriously injured by cars, buses and lorries. As a driver, be prepared for children to wobble or suddenly wander across your path. Always give them plenty of room. And after parking, always look before you open your door.

CHILDREN IN CARS

We all know that the injuries caused in car accidents can be serious ones. Yet we don't give much thought to the safety of children in cars. Perhaps we think 'it won't happen to me'. But sadly, it does happen. Every year as many as 10,000 child passengers are injured in car accidents, and 75 children are killed.



This girl was sitting in the front seat of a car without a seat belt when the car crashed. She got a broken leg because her knee hit the dashboard and she injured her face on the windscreen.



How to prevent accidents



Never hold a baby in your arms in the front seat. Babies under 1 year old travelling in the front seat must be in a carrycot harness or child safety seat. *Never* put a seat belt round both yourself and the baby in your arms.

Never let a young child stand, or sit, without a restraint, in the front of a car. By law children travelling in the front seats of cars have to be properly restrained.



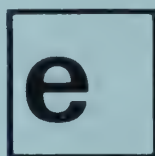
Never let a child stand on the back seat. Use your special children's door locks if your car is fitted with them.

Because so few people have seat belts in the back of their car, the law allows children to travel unrestrained in the back seat. This is only second best. The safest way for children to travel is properly restrained in the back seat.

Choose the right restraint

Always make sure your child is safely restrained in the car. If you do, you can dramatically cut down the risk of serious injury in a crash. Remember too that if children are restrained, they're less likely to distract the driver.

Make sure that any equipment you buy carries the British Standard Kitemark. Or, if the equipment carries one of these E symbols, it means that it meets certain international standards.



The type of restraint you need depends on the child's age:



Babies under one year old should be in a rearward facing infant carrier, in either the front or back seat. The carrier is held in place by an adult seat belt. Alternatively, fasten the baby's carrycot to the back seat with a special harness. Use a cot cover, net or bedclothes so that your baby can't be thrown out.

Toddlers aged one to four should be belted into a child safety seat properly fastened in the back of the car.



Children aged between about 4 and 10 years can use an adult seat belt, but only with a special booster cushion to help the belt fit properly. It is best if children sit in the back of the car.



Alternatively the child can use a special child harness in the back seat.

Older school children about 10 years old and over can use an adult seat belt in the front or back of the car.

Seat belts of all kinds should fit snugly.

EMERGENCY FIRST AID

In an emergency, don't panic. Try to keep calm. The child's life may depend on it, and calmness will help to comfort the child.

The really important things to check immediately are breathing, bleeding and consciousness.

1. Check breathing

If the child has stopped breathing, give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation (the kiss of life) immediately. Every second counts.

Mouth-to-mouth resuscitation

1. Quickly clear the child's mouth of any dirt, vomit, etc.



2. Bend the head back with one hand and push the jaw upwards with the other hand. This lifts the tongue off the back of the throat.



3. Squeeze the nostrils together, put your mouth completely over the

child's mouth, and blow gently. See that the chest rises as you blow in.

4. Take your mouth away and let the air come out of the child's chest.

5. Repeat this about 15 times a minute. Keep on until the child starts to breathe again.

6. Then gently place the child in the 'recovery' position (see facing page).

Note: With a small baby, it may be easier to breathe into the mouth and nose at the same time.

If, after several breaths given mouth-to-mouth, the child is still very pale or a blue/grey colour, then the heart may have stopped. If you think the heart has stopped, give heart massage as well as mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

Heart massage

1. Lay the child on his/her back on the floor. Kneel by the child.



2. Press on the lower half of the child's breast bone. Use moderate pressure for a young child and even less for a



baby. Press about once every second quicker for a baby.

3. The child will not start breathing until after the heart has started beating. So after pressing 5 times, stop the heart massage and give a breath by mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

If there is another person with you get them to do the breathing while you do the heart massage, stopping every 5 seconds to let the other person fill up the child's lungs.

4. Once the heart has started beating keep on with mouth-to-mouth resuscitation until the breathing starts again.

5. Then gently place the child in the 'recovery' position (see facing page).

Note: It is best to learn how to give heart massage and mouth-to-mouth resuscitation properly. You can learn on a first aid course. See page 36 for details.

2. Check bleeding

If there's severe bleeding, press firmly on the wound using a pad of clean cloth (if available) or your fingers. Keep pressing until the bleeding stops.

3. Check consciousness

It can be dangerous for an unconscious child to lie on his or her back because the throat can be blocked by the tongue or by vomit. So if the child is still breathing, but unconscious or very drowsy, it's important to place them in the 'recovery' position.

Recovery position



Turn the child half way over onto his or her front, with the underneath arm behind and the upper arm bent in front. Bend the upper leg so that it is at right angles to the trunk. Turn the face towards the ground with the neck back so that the tongue falls forward and the child can breathe.

If you think there may be broken bones or internal injuries, don't move the child unless you have to.

Never leave an unconscious child alone unless you have to. The child may stop breathing or choke.

4. If necessary dial 999

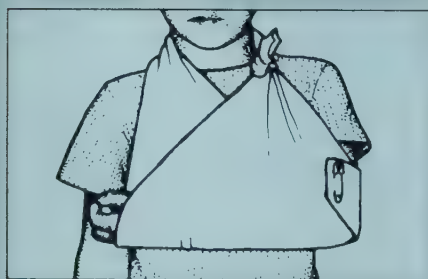
If you need help phone for an ambulance. Somebody else may be able to do this for you.

Broken bones

1. Don't move the child unless you have to. This is especially important if you think the child may have injured his/her spine or neck.



2. If the child has to be moved, be very gentle as you may cause further damage. If it's a leg that's broken, tie it gently but firmly to the uninjured leg before you move the child. Put some padding in between the legs.



If it's the arm that's injured and if it can be moved, put it in a sling or support. Be very gentle and comfort the child.

Always try to get expert help first before moving a child with a broken bone.

Don't give a child anything to drink after an accident if you think that an anaesthetic may be needed later.

Burns

1. Immediately put the burn under cold water, or run plenty of cold water over it, to reduce the heat in the skin. It's important to do this for at least 10 minutes.
2. Take off anything tight like a belt or jewellery. Burnt skin can swell up.
3. Then cover the burn with a clean, non-fluffy cloth like a clean cotton pillow case or linen tea towel. This cuts down the danger of infection.
4. If burnt clothes are stuck to the skin, don't try to take them off.
5. Then call an ambulance, or take the child to hospital. You should take a child to hospital for anything other than a very small burn.

Don't put butter, oil or ointment on a burn. It only has to be cleaned off again before treatment can be given.

Don't prick any blisters. You'll let germs in.

Choking

1. Don't waste time trying to pick the object out with your fingers unless it's easy to get hold of. Probably it will be too far back and too slippery.
2. Hold the baby upside down by the legs. Slap the baby's back smartly between the shoulder blades. If the object doesn't come out, do it again.
3. If after several tries this hasn't worked, as a last resort give the baby's tummy a short sharp squeeze. This should push the object out of the baby's windpipe.

Cuts

1. If there's severe bleeding, press firmly on the wound using a pad of clean cloth if available, or your fingers. Keep pressing until the bleeding stops. This may take 10 minutes or more. If it's a large wound, try to press the edges of the wound together.
2. Don't use a tourniquet or tie anything so tightly that it stops the circulation.
3. If possible, lay the child down and raise the injured limb. This helps to stop the bleeding. But don't do this if you think the limb is broken.
4. Cover the wound with a clean dressing.
5. Then call an ambulance or take the child to hospital.
6. If the wound is dirty, or the accident happened outside, ask your doctor about a tetanus injection.

Don't give a child anything to drink after an accident if you think that an anaesthetic may be needed later.

Poisoning

Pills and medicines

1. If you're not sure whether your child has swallowed something, spend a minute or two looking for the missing pills. Check they haven't rolled under a chair, for example.
2. If you still think something has been swallowed, take your child straight away to your doctor or hospital – whichever is quickest.
3. If possible, take with you the container and a sample of whatever you think has been swallowed.

Don't give salt and water to make the child sick. Salt can be very dangerous in large amounts.

Household and garden chemicals – turps, petrol, paraffin, acids, caustics etc.

1. Gently give the child a glass of milk to drink. If there's no milk, give water instead. This dilutes the poison.
2. Then quickly take the child to hospital.
3. If possible, take with you the container and a sample of whatever you think has been swallowed.

Scalds

1. *Immediately* put the scald under cold water or run plenty of cold water over it to reduce the heat in the skin. It's important to do this for at least 10 minutes. Take off any clothes covering the scald so that the water can get to it.
2. Take off anything tight like a belt or jewellery. Scalded skin can swell up.
3. Next, cover the scald with a clean, non-fluffy cloth like a clean cotton pillowcase or linen tea towel. This cuts down the danger of infection.
4. Then call an ambulance, or take the child to hospital. You should take a child to hospital for anything other than a very small scald.

Don't put butter, oil or ointment on a scald. It only has to be cleaned off again before treatment can be given.

Don't prick any blisters. You'll let germs in.

Shock

1. If pale and unwell after an accident, make the child lie down.



2. If a lot of blood has been lost, keep the head down and raise the legs. This makes more blood go to the head. But don't do this if you suspect a head injury or broken leg.
3. Keep the child covered up and warm but not too hot.

Don't give a child anything to drink after an accident if you think that an anaesthetic may be needed later.

Suffocation

1. Quickly take away whatever is causing the suffocation.
2. If the child has stopped breathing, give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. (See page 30.)

A child should go to hospital after an accident if he or she:

is or has been unconscious
 is vomiting or drowsy
 is bleeding from the ears
 has stopped breathing at some stage
 has lost a lot of blood
 may have internal injuries
 complains of severe pain anywhere

If you are worried or uncertain about a child's injuries, it's wisest to get a doctor's advice. You should go to the nearest hospital with an Accident and Emergency Department (Casualty), or to a local doctor, whichever is quickest. Not all hospitals have an Accident and Emergency Department so it's worth checking where your nearest one is.

What to put in a first aid kit

1. Box of adhesive dressings (various sizes)
2. Box of sterile gauze dressings (various sizes) – for cuts
3. Small packet of paper tissues – to use as temporary sterile dressings
4. 2 or 3 cotton bandages
5. 2 or 3 crepe bandages – for sprains
6. Triangular bandage, or clean old linen or cotton tea towel, or other cotton cloth – to use as a sling or as a large dressing for a burn or scald
7. Small roll of cotton wool – for padding
8. Blunt-ended scissors
9. Safety pins and roll of adhesive tape – for fastening dressings and slings
10. Small bar of soap – for washing dirty wounds
11. Antiseptic cream – for minor cuts etc.

Always keep a first aid kit in the house. Keep another in the car. And always take a kit away on holiday with you.



USEFUL INFORMATION

Learning about first aid

If your child does have an accident, you'll be able to cope much better if you have learnt how to do first aid properly. The British Red Cross Society and the St. John Ambulance (or the St. Andrew's Ambulance Association in Scotland) run first aid and other courses, including emergency first aid courses. For information about courses in your area, contact:

either your local Red Cross branch (address and phone number in your telephone directory under either 'British Red Cross Society' or 'Red Cross');

or your local St. John Ambulance branch, or if you live in Scotland, your local branch of the St. Andrew's Ambulance Association (address and phone number in your telephone directory).

The British Red Cross, St. John Ambulance and St. Andrew's Ambulance Association also run courses for young people in a wide variety of activities including survival, and accident and fire prevention.

The Royal Life Saving Society also run first aid courses. You can get details from:

The Royal Life Saving Society
Mountbatten House
Studley
Warwickshire B80 7NN.

Children can learn a lot about first aid and about safety by joining either the Scouts or Girl Guides. Your library or local youth office will be able to tell you where to find your local Scout or Guide unit.

Learning about water safety

Your children should learn to swim as early as possible. You can ask about lessons at your local swimming bath. It's also important for children to learn about water safety. You can write for information about this to the Royal Life Saving Society (address above) or to:

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents
Cannon House
The Priory Queensway
Birmingham B4 6BS

Children should also learn rescue skills. Ask about lessons at your local swimming bath, or write for information to the Royal Life Saving Society (address above).

Learning about road safety

Children aged three or over can learn about road safety by joining one of the 'Tufty' clubs organised by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents. You can get details from the Road Safety Officer at your local authority. Look in the telephone directory for the local authority number. Or write for information to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (address above).

If your child rides a bike, a Cycling Proficiency Test is a good idea. For details of courses run in your area, contact your Road Safety Officer (as above) or the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (address above).

Home safety advice

There are a number of people who can give you helpful advice about how to make your home safer. Many local authorities have Home Safety Officers, usually working in the Environmental Health Department. The Environmental Health Officer may also be able to help, and so can your Health Visitor.

If you would like more information about water, road or home safety, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (address above) has many useful publications and can answer your queries.



HEALTH EDUCATION AUTHORITY

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